

Message Text

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51 S

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

----- 119174

R 101146Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9710

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY MANILA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 0535

EXDIS

MANILA PLEASE PASS UNDER SECRETARY MAW

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, TH

SUBJ: UNDER SECRETARY MAW'S CALL ON GENERAL KRIANGSAK

SUMMARY: UNDER SECRETARY MAW AND I HAD FRANK TALK WITH GENERAL KRIANGSAK, CHIEF OF STAFF, SUPREME COMMAND, ON JANUARY 9. OUR DISCUSSIONS DEALT WITH MOST OF THE CURRENT MUTUAL US-RTG PROBLEMS AND COVERED THE SITUATION IN INDOCHINA. GENERAL KRIANGSAK ESSENTIALLY DID NOT SPEAK IN TERMS OF DOLLAR ASSISTANCE. INSTEAD HE DESCRIBED THE PROBLEMS FACING THE RTG AND PROPOSED THAT THE US AND RTG IDENTIFY THEIR MUTUAL INTERESTS AND WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER TO COUNTER THE THREAT TO SOUTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY. THE KEY TOPICS OF INTEREST FOLLOW. END SUMMARY

1. PREDICTABLY, KRIANGSAK REMINDS US THAT A RESPONSE TO GENERAL KRUEN'S REQUEST TO DEPUTY SECRETARY CLEMENTS THE FIRST OF OCTOBER WAS NOW LONG OVERDUE. HE HOPED THAT AT LEAST WE COULD PROVIDE HIM WITH A GENERAL RESPONSE EVEN IF SPECIFIC DETAILS HAD NOT BEEN DECIDED. I EXPLAINED THAT THE USG WAS WORKING HARD TO PUT TOGETHER A MEANINGFUL RESPONSE BUT THAT THE CURRENT INDOCHINA SITUATION CALLED FOR A RE-EVALUATION OF OUR SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO THE ENTIRE AREA, INCLUDING THAILAND. GENERAL
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KRUEN'S REQUEST WAS BEING GIVEN CAREFUL STUDY AND A CONSIDERED

RESPONSE WOULD BE FORTHCOMING PENDING THE OUTCOME OF THIS REASSESSMENT.

2. SECRETARY MAW ADDED THAT THE RTG MUST UNDERSTAND OUR PROBLEMS SINCE WE MUST PLACE OUR LIMITED ASSISTANCE WHERE IT IS MOST NEEDED AND THIS MAY TAKE SOME TIME. SECRETARY MAW EXPLAINED THAT ALTHOUGH WE HAVE RECEIVED AN AUTHORIZATION FROM OUR LAST CONGRESS, WE ARE STILL OPERATING UNDER A CONTINUING RESOLUTION WHICH RUNS OUT ON FEBRUARY 28. THIS MEANS THAT WE MUST RETURN TO THE NEW CONGRESS LATE IN JANUARY TO OBTAIN OUR APPROPRIATION. A BROADER ANSWER TO KRIANGSAK'S INQUIRY IS HOW THE USG CAN BEST IMPLEMENT OUR PROGRAM TO CARRY ON AND THAT THIS WILL REQUIRE AN IN-DEPTH STUDY.

3. KRIANGSAK GAVE HIS OPINION THAT THE THAI MILITARY SHOULD BE BUILT UP AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO BE PREPARED TO ACT AS A SECOND DEFENSE AREA AND A BULWARK AGAINST A NORTH VIETNAM INCURSION. HE BELIEVED THIS MUST BE DONE NOW OR IT WOULD COST MORE LATER TO PREPARE THIS "SECOND FRONT". HE BASED HIS ARGUMENTS AND THINKING ON A WORST CASE PROPOSITION, I.E., THAT INDOCHINA MIGHT COME UNDER NVN CONTROL. KRIANGSAK SAID THAT THE RTG WAS NO THREAT TO ITS NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES BUT IT NEEDED A STRONGER DEFENSE IN ORDER TO PREPARE FOR THE WORST. IN THIS WAY, THE RTG WOULD ASSIST IN MAINTAINING THE STABILITY OF THE AREA AND UPHOLD FREE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. KRIANGSAK STATED THAT THEIR MOST SERIOUS NEEDS WERE FOR GOOD MODERN WEAPONS BUT NOT NECESSARILY THE MOST SOPHISTICATED KIND. THE EQUIPMENT NOW MAINTAINED BY THEIR NAVY, AIR FORCE AND ARMY WAS OBSOLESCENT AND INSUFFICIENT TO PROTECT THEIR EXTENSIVE BORDERS. HE WAS NOT DISCUSSING THIS MATTER IN TERMS OF THE MONEY INVOLVED BUT WANTED US TO KNOW RTG THINKING AND THE URGENT NECESSITY FOR MODERNIZING THE RTARF.

4. I SAID THAT THAILAND WAS A STABLE AND IMPORTANT AREA AND
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THAT WE HOPED TO HELP THE RTG TO THE EXTENT OF OUR ABILITY BUT OUR ABILITY IS INCREASINGLY LIMITED. KRIANGSAK EXPLAINED THAT THEIR OBSOLETE EQUIPMENT AND LACK OF SPARE PARTS WAS A SERIOUS PROBLEM. HOWEVER, THE RTG WOULD USE THEIR OWN RESOURCES TO THE UTMOST TO BUILD THEIR OWN DEFENSE AND IN THE LONG-TERM PROVIDE SELF-SUFFICIENCY. HE REMINDED US AGAIN OF THE BRIGADE STOCKS WHICH HAD BEEN PROMISED BY OUR GOVERNMENT WHEN THEIR FORCES

DEPARTED VIETNAM. HE ALSO REFERRED TO THE SLAT STOCKS AGREEMENT. HE BELIEVES THAT MOST OF THESE STOCKS HAD DWINDLED AWAY OR BEEN TRANSFERRED AND HE WAS CONCERNED THAT WE HAD NOT FULFILLED OUR OBLIGATION TO TURN THESE OVER TO THE RTG.
KINTNER

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER S/S-O - MS ELTZ.

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AMEMBASSY SAIGON
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 0535
EXDIS
MANILA PLEASE PASS UNDER SECRETARY MAW

E.O. 11652: GDS
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5. KRIANGSAK ASKED US TO UNDERSTAND THAT HIS FRANK COMMENTS WERE MEANT IN THE BEST SPIRIT AS HE BELIEVED OUR OBJECTIVES COINCIDED. HE SAID SOMETIMES HIS TACTICS WITHIN THE RTG BUREAUCRACY MAY SEEM STRANGE BUT HE HAD INTERNAL PROBLEMS TO CONTEND WITH IN ORDER TO BE HELPFUL TO THE US. NEVERTHELESS, THE LONG FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE RTG AND THE US WOULD CONTINUE. KRIANGSAK SAID HE WAS SIMPLY EXPLAINING THE RTG PROBLEMS AND PROPOSED THAT THE US AND RTG WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER TO IDENTIFY THEIR MUTUAL INTERESTS WHICH WOULD IN TURN HELP STABILIZE THE SECURITY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA.

6. SECRETARY MAW REVIEWED THE CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATION PROBLEM BUT EXPLAINED THAT WE WANT TO OBTAIN AS MUCH AS WE CAN GET TO MAINTAIN THE RTG PROGRAM AT THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL.

7. GENERAL KRIANGSAK EXPRESSED HIS DEEP CONCERN OVER THE WAY EARLIER US MILITARY WITHDRAWALS HAD BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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HANDLED AND STRESSED HIS DESIRE FOR CLOSE CONSULTATION IN FUTURE IN ORDER THAT THE RTG COULD PLAN PROPERLY. THE RTG HAD NOT ALWAYS HAD ADVANCE NOTICE, WHICH HE BELIEVED WAS QUITE UNFAIR SINCE THEY WERE OFTEN CAUGHT UNAWARE AND WERE PLACED IN THE POSITION OF HAVING TO PRETEND THAT THEY PARTICIPATED SUBSTANTIVELY IN JOINT DISCUSSIONS WITH THE US. I PROMISED TO CONSULT WITH HIM AS SOON AS IT WAS POSSIBLE TO REACH REALISTIC CONCLUSIONS BUT I SAID THAT AT THE MOMENT THE NEW SITUATION IN INDOCHINA PREVENTED US FROM MAKING ANY LONG-RANGE JUDGMENTS SINCE FURTHER WITHDRAWALS AT THIS TIME MIGHT ENCOURAGE THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TO EXPAND THEIR OFFENSIVE.

8. IN THE COURSE OF REVIEWING THE CAMBODIAN SITUATION, WE DWELT ON THE DIFFICULTY OF MAINTAINING SUPPLIES TO CAMBODIA IN THE EVENT THE MEKONG COULD NOT STAY OPEN. I ASKED KRIANGSAK IF THERE WAS ANY CHANCE THAT THE RTG WOULD PERMIT FURTHER TRANSHIPMENTS OF PL 480 RICE TO CAMBODIA IN VIEW OF PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. I OUTLINED THE SUPPLY PROBLEM AND EXPLAINED THAT THERE COULD BE A CRITICAL SHORTAGE WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. KRIANGSAK RESPONDED THAT IT WOULD BE AGREEABLE WITH THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE IF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE CONCURRED. HE IMPLIED THAT THE CIVILIAN MINISTRIES WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS PROBLEM. (EMBASSY WILL PROMPTLY REPORT THE OUTCOME OF OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE. THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE CONFIRMED TO US ON JANUARY 10 THEY WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THE TRANSSHIPMENT OF PL 480 RICE IN SMALL QUANTITIES BY AIR.)

9. SECRETARY MAW DEPARTED BEFORE THIS CABLE WAS TRANSMITTED. HE MAY WISH TO COMMENT OR MAKE APPROPRIATE CHANGES. KINTNER

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER S/S-O - MS ELTZ.

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